

THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of communicating with a customer,
2 comprising:
3 receiving a signal that indicates arrival of
4 a customer at a service facility;
5 in response to the received signal, accessing
6 a database to retrieve first data concerning the customer;
7 and
8 on the basis of the retrieved first data,
9 transmitting second data to the customer.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the
2 transmitting step includes transmitting the second data to a
3 computing device carried by the customer.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the signal is
2 received from the computing device carried by the customer.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the signal is
2 received from a device carried by the customer.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the device
2 carried by the customer is a computing device.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the first data
2 includes the second data.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the service
2 facility is an airline terminal.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first data
2 includes flight reservation information.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein the second
2 data includes instructions for checking-in for a flight.

1 10. The method of claim 7, wherein the second
2 data includes a notification that a flight is delayed or
3 canceled.

1 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the second
2 data includes information concerning a substitute flight.

1 12. The method of claim 10, wherein the second
2 data includes information concerning a hotel reservation.

1 13. A system for providing communication between
2 a customer and a service provider, comprising:

3 a portable computing device carried by the
4 customer; and

5 a computer operated by the service provider
6 and programmed to:

7 receive a signal that indicates that the
8 customer has arrived at a service facility;

9 in response to the received signal,

10 access a database to retrieve first data concerning the

11 customer; and

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12 on the basis of the retrieved first
13 data, transmit second data to the portable computing device
14 carried by the customer.

1 14. The system of claim 13, wherein the signal is
2 transmitted from the portable computing device carried by
3 the customer.

1 15. The system of claim 13, wherein the portable
2 computing device is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

1 16. The system of claim 13, wherein the first
2 data includes the second data.

1 17. The system of claim 13, wherein the service
2 facility is an airline terminal.

1 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the first
2 data includes flight reservation information.

1 19. The system of claim 17, wherein the second
2 data includes instructions for checking-in for a flight.

1 20. The system of claim 17, wherein the second
2 data includes a notification that a flight is delayed or
3 canceled.

1 21. The system of claim 20, wherein the second
2 data includes information concerning a substitute flight.

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1 22. The system of claim 21, wherein the second
2 data includes information concerning a hotel reservation.

1 23. A method of communicating with a customer,
2 comprising:
3 automatically detecting arrival of a customer
4 at a service facility;
5 identifying the customer;
6 retrieving information related to the
7 customer from a database; and
8 transmitting a message to the customer via a
9 computing device carried by the customer.

1 24. The method of claim 23, wherein the computing
2 device is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

1 25. The method of claim 23, wherein the computing
2 device is a cellular telephone.

1 26. A method of communicating with a customer at
2 an airline terminal, comprising:
3 receiving a signal that indicates arrival of
4 the customer at the airline terminal; and
5 in response to receipt of the signal,
6 transmitting data via a wireless communication channel to a
7 portable computing device carried by the customer.

1 27. The method of claim 26, further comprising
2 displaying the transmitted data via a display device that is
3 part of the portable computing device.

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1 28. The method of claim 26, further comprising
2 retrieving the data from a database prior to the
3 transmitting step.

1 29. The method of claim 26, further comprising
2 identifying the customer on the basis of the received
3 signal.

1 30. The method of claim 26, further comprising
2 determining whether the customer's flight is on time, the
3 transmitted data indicating a result of the determining
4 step.

1 31. The method of claim 30, further comprising
2 presenting an alternative flight to the customer if it is
3 determined that the customer's flight is not on time.

1 32. The method of claim 30, further comprising
2 booking a hotel room for the customer if it is determined
3 that the customer's flight is not on time.

1 33. A computer program product comprising:
2 a medium readable by a computer, the computer
3 readable medium having computer program code adapted to:
4 receive a signal that indicates arrival
5 of a customer at a service facility;
6 in response to the received signal,
7 access a database to retrieve first data concerning the
8 customer; and

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9 on the basis of the retrieved first
10 data, transmit second data to the customer.

1 34. A computer program product comprising:
2 a medium readable by a computer, the computer
3 readable medium having computer program code adapted to:
4 automatically detect arrival of a
5 customer at a service facility;
6 identify the customer;
7 retrieve information related to the
8 customer from a database; and
9 transmit a message to the customer via a
10 computing device carried by the customer.

1 35. A computer program product comprising:
2 a medium readable by a computer, the computer
3 readable medium having computer program code adapted to:
4 receive a signal that indicates arrival
5 of a customer at an airline terminal; and
6 in response to receipt of the signal,
7 transmit data via a wireless communication channel to a
8 portable computing device carried by the customer.

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